Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheet makes changes to Fig. 4 and replaces the original sheet with Fig. 4.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 40-48 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4 and 11 are amended, claim 12 is canceled and the specification and Fig. 4 are amended to correct a typographical informality. The claims are amended to even more clearly distinguish over the applied references. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 4 can be found in the original specification in that, for example, each of blocks 221, 225, 228 and 232 constitute intermediate image processing steps of the format processing procedure, and each of these blocks obviously has buffer memory area(s) to hold received blocks of image data. See Fig. 4 and its description at page 35, line 4 - page 44, line 16 (moreover, the inclusion of buffer memories for similar types of processing blocks is shown in Fig. 17 and described in conjunction with Fig. 17 at page 47, lines 19-22). Support for the amendment to claim 11 can be found in the original specification at, for example, Fig. 4 and page 44, line 17 - page 45, line 13. The revisions to the specification and Fig. 4, to state that the output Y signal corresponds to an 8X8 pixel area (instead of 16X8 or 16X16) corrects an obvious typographical error in that the output of adder 230 (the Y signal) must be 8X8 because both inputs to adder 230 are 8X8 (see the Y2 output of gain circuit 224 in Fig. 4 and see page 43, lines 9-11 regarding the Y1 signal). Thus, no new matter is added by the above amendments.

I.   Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner is requested to consider the reference identified in the Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith.

II.   All Pending Claims are Patentable

Applicants thank Examiner Henn for the courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during the August 8 personal interview. It was agreed at the interview that the above amendments overcome the rejections, pending further search and consideration by the Examiner. The substance of the interview is set forth in the following remarks.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 7-10, 47 and 48. Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance as detailed below.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 40, 42, 45 and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,153,730 to Nagasaki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,373,322 to Laroche et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,661,451 to Kijima et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action relies upon Laroche et al. to modify Nagasaki et al. to allegedly result in the second image processing circuit of independent claim 1 and the second image processing instruction of independent claim 4. However, neither Nagasaki et al. nor Laroche et al. discloses or suggests an image processing circuit or instruction, as recited in independent claims 1 and 4, respectively, that performs format processing in units of blocks ranging over n lines X m rows to produce second image data having a block size of $(n - i)$ X $(m - j)$, wherein i and j are integers having values of at least 1 (that is, the second image data has a block size smaller than the blocks of first image data on which the format processing is performed), the smaller block size of the second image data being used for the recording processing subsequently performed on the second image data.

Furthermore, neither reference discloses format processing performed through a plurality of intermediate image processing steps, each of the intermediate image processing steps outputting a block of intermediate image data that is temporarily stored in corresponding memory areas, the block of intermediate image data output from one of the intermediate image processing steps being input to a subsequent one of the intermediate processing steps to ultimately generate the second image data, a block size of the blocks of intermediate image data output by the intermediate processing steps becoming smaller sequentially to ultimately obtain the block size of $(n - i)$ X $(m - j)$, as now recited in claims 1 and 4. Although the interpolation processing of Laroche et al. may involve block processing, it

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does not output blocks of intermediate image data in sequentially smaller block sizes as recited in claims 1 and 4. Kijima et al. also does not disclose or suggest such features. Thus, independent claims 1 and 4, along with their dependent claims, are patentable. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the above references that are applied against claims 1 and 4, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,631,701 to Miyake. In addition, claim 41 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the references applied against claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,532,039 to Anderson. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Claims 3, 6 and 41 are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to their corresponding independent claims 1 and 4. Withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

Claims 11, 12, 43 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nagasaki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,529,238 to Mahant-Shetti et al., and further in view of Kijima et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The rejection of claims 43 and 44 is improper because these claims depend from claim 1, which is rejected in view of a different combination of references. Moreover, these claims are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1.

With respect to claim 11 (claim 12 has been canceled), the combination of Nagasaki et al., Mahant-Shetti et al. and Kijima et al. does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in independent claim 11. Claim 11 recites, among other things, that the second image processing circuit processes the first image data to create at least a color difference data, and the color difference data undergoes median processing. As recited in claim 11, the median processing is part of the format processing that is carried out so that the resulting data is appropriate for compression processing. In Mahant-Shetti et al., median processing is performed during a pre-process (analogous to the claim 11 pre-treatment), and is performed on

the brightness signal not on a color difference signal. Thus, Mahant-Shetti et al. does not

disclose or suggest performing median processing on color difference data during format
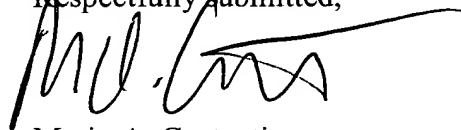
processing.

Accordingly, claim 11 is patentable over the combination of Nagasaki et al., Mahant-

Shetti et al. and Kijima et al. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in

condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly

solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be desirable in order to place this

application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants'

undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAC/ccs

Attachments
    Replacement Sheet (1)
    Information Disclosure Statement
    Petition for Extension of Time

Date: August 23, 2006

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